

*Amendments to the Claims*

1. (original) A process for the preparation of multiple cross-linked derivatives of hyaluronic acid, which process comprises covalently cross-linking HA via two or more different functional groups, wherein said cross-linking is effected by contacting HA with one or more chemical cross-linking agents so as to form two or more chemically distinct cross-links, between said HA molecules.
2. (original) A process according to claim 1 wherein the functional groups are selected from hydroxyl, carboxyl and amino.
3. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the crosslinking is effected by means of two or more different bonds selected from the group consisting of ether, ester, sulfone, amine, imino and amide bonds.
4. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the cross-linking agent is selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde, glutaraldehyde, divinyl sulfone, a polyanhydride, a polyaldehyde, a polyhydric alcohol, carbodiimide, epichlorohydrin, ethylene glycol diglycidylether, butanediol diglycidylether, polyglycerol polyglycidylether, polyethylene glycol diglycidylether, polypropylene glycol diglycidylether, and a bis-or poly-epoxy cross-linker.

5. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein an ether bond is formed using a crosslinking agent selected from the group consisting of bis epoxides and poly epoxides under alkaline conditions.

6. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein an ester bond is formed using a crosslinking agent selected from the group consisting of bis epoxides and poly epoxides under acidic conditions.

7. (previously presented) A process according to claim 5 wherein the crosslinker is selected from the group consisting of 1,2,3,4-diepoxybutane and 1,2,7,8-diepoxyoctane.

8. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein an ether bond is formed using a gluteraldehyde cross-linking agent under acidic conditions.

9. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the crosslinking of each type of functional group is effected sequentially.

10. (cancelled)

11. (previously presented) A process according to claim 9 wherein HA is first cross-linked via the hydroxyl groups by formation of ether bonds and subsequently cross-linked via the carboxyl groups by formation of ester bonds.

12. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the crosslinking of each type of functional group is effected simultaneously.

13. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 for preparing double crosslinked HA.

14. (original) A process according to claim 13 which comprises:

(a) cross-linking HA via a first functional group and

(b) subsequently further cross-linking the product of (a) via a second functional group, wherein said first and second functional groups represent different chemical entities.

15. (previously presented) Multiple cross-linked HA obtainable by a process according to claim 1.

16. (original) HA cross-linked to a further molecule of HA wherein the HA is crosslinked by at least two different types of bond.

17. (previously presented) Cross-linked HA according to claim 15 wherein the crosslinking bonds are two or more selected from the group consisting of ether, ester, sulfone; amine, imino and amide bonds.

18. (previously presented) Multiple cross-linked HA according to claim 15 in the form of a film.

19. (previously presented) Multiple cross-linked HA according to claim 15 in the form of a gel.

20. (previously presented) HA according to claim 15 which is double cross linked HA.

21. (previously presented) A product comprising multiple cross-linked HA according to claim 15.

22. (cancelled)

23. (cancelled)

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.